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INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Richmond, Virginia

To: Dr. R. Ferguson Date: March 16, 1990

From: Roger T. Bass

Subject: Cooperative Agricultural Programs With PM Leaf Department

I am providing the following information as you requested. As the PM representative on the Flue-Cured and Burley Tobacco Cooperative Variety Evaluation Committee Programs it has been my function to carry out and to coordinate the tasks of these programs in conjunction with PM Leaf Department personnel. Various other types of agricultural research tests concerned with agronomic production practices have also been included in the scope of these activities. These test programs are a cooperative effort of the U.S. tobacco industry with all facets of the industry participating and being represented. The goal of this effort is to maintain, improve and assure that the U.S. grown tobacco used in our products meets specific standards with respect to high quality characteristics. These quality characteristics include agronomic factors, chemical content, physical appearance, and acceptable smoke flavor. The potential new tobacco variety candidates must be tested for a minimum of two years at eleven research station locations for the Regional Small Plot Test and at twenty six farm locations for The Regional Farm Test. If an entry meets all minimum standards, it is then eligible for release as a new variety for grower planting. These tests are conducted each crop year in the major tobacco producing states. Since this program began about twenty five years ago, several hundred entries have been tested. As an example, during the 1989 crop tests a total of 2426 leaf tobacco samples were evaluated for physical characteristics in conjunction with PM Leaf Department personnel. In essence, this cooperative, industry wide program provides us with the necessary tool for the quality control of our most important raw material, leaf tobacco. The continuation of this program will support our efforts to maintain the highest possible level of excellence and quality in our products.

/ds

cc: G. Bokelman
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